Overview

The Wisconsin Film Festival is Wisconsin's premier independent film event and only major film festival. A public program of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Arts Institute, it is a four-day annual festival that takes place each spring in campus and downtown Madison venues.

The Festival presents the best new independent film (feature, documentary, experimental), world cinema and new media; cultivates discovery through talks, panels, performances and coffeehouse discussions with filmmakers; and showcases the work of Wisconsin filmmakers through juried competitions. The Festival is committed to independent film culture, quality programming, community involvement, and a filmmaker-friendly environment.

2001

The 3rd Annual Wisconsin Film Festival (March 29 - April 1, 2001) featured 110 films and sixty local and visiting filmmakers and speakers, with audience attendance of more than 14,000.

Programs included "Light in the East: New Asian Cinema," featuring the Midwest premiere of "The Foul King" (South Korea) with director Kim Ji-Woon in person; the three films of acclaimed Korean director Hong Sang-Soo, including the US premiere of "Virgin Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors," with Hong in person; the US premieres of "Attack the Gas Station" (South Korea) and "Bangkok Dangerous" (Thailand); and film introductions and talks on Asian cinema by program advisor and film critic Tony Rayns.

The Festival also presented the Wisconsin premieres of "George Washington" (filmmaker David Gordon Green in person), "Series 7," "Calle 54," "American Chai" (filmmaker Anurag Mehta in person), "The Gleaners and I," "Samia," "Scout's Honor" (filmmaker Tom Shepard in person) and "Yi Yi;" the Midwest premiere of the D.FILM Digital Film Festival 2001 World Tour (with digital projection); the retrospective "A Well Spent Life: The Cinema of Les Blank" featuring Academy Film Archive restored prints and Blank in person; and programs by Los Angeles-based video artists Animal Charm.

In addition, the Festival showcased work by more than 20 Wisconsin filmmakers, including the Wisconsin premieres of Sarah Price's "Caesar's Park" and Pola Rapaport's Blind Light" and "Family Secret," and the "Wisconsin's Own" competition juried by Price, Rob Nelson (Minneapolis / St. Paul "City Pages" Film Editor and National Society of Film Critics member) and Jeffrey Kurz (producer / writer, Belle City Pictures, and former Miramax executive).

2002

The 4th annual Wisconsin Film Festival is Thursday, April 4 – Sunday, April 7, 2002. Submissions guidelines and juried competitions for Wisconsin filmmakers will be announced in September.

Buzz

Local press has hailed the Festival as a "smash hit," "one of the best events of its kind in the Midwest," a "stunning" success, and "a vital forum for community-unifying art."

History

In three years, the Wisconsin Film Festival has exploded in size, programming scope and community support. The first Festival in 1999 was organized by University of Wisconsin-Madison students James Kreul and Wendi Weger. Funded by the Arts Institute with support from the Wisconsin Film Office, the Festival featured free screenings of some 30 films in two small campus venues. Estimated attendance was 3,000.

In 2000, the 2nd annual Festival added a professional director (Mary Carbine), expanded into downtown venues, such as the Orpheum Theatre and Madison Art Center, and offered a mix of free and paid admission programming featuring 70 films and 40 visiting filmmakers. The Festival more than tripled its attendance and earned substantial funding from corporate sponsors and granting agencies.

The 2001 Festival marked the third year of considerable expansion and, for the first time, a significantly international lineup. It added another downtown venue (the Majestic Theatre) and featured 110 films from 21 countries and some 60 local and visiting filmmakers and speakers. The 2001 Festival again increased attendance to more than 14,000 and doubled the number of corporate and community sponsors.

Contact

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